

REMARKS

This Amendment addresses the issues raised in the outstanding final Office Action. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application as amended herein. Claims 2, 5, and newly added 6 - 8 are pending. Claims 2, 5, and 7 are independent.

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reik et al. Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fukushima. Without acceding to either rejection, each of Claims 2 and 5 has been amended to clarify the subject matter intended to be claimed.

In the Amendment dated January 7, 2005, Claim 2 was amended to recite that the torque limiter includes a torque transmission plate fixed to a drive member of the damper, and a friction plate held in frictional engagement with the torque transmission plate by a press plate spline-engaged with an inner peripheral portion of a torque transmitting member and pressed toward the torque transmission plate by a press spring. As was pointed out in that Amendment, the foregoing features are exemplified in Fig. 1 by the arrangement of torque transmission plate 91, damper drive member 3, friction plate 92, press plate 94 spline-engaged with torque transmitting member 45, and press spring 93.

By the present Amendment, Claim 2 has been amended more particularly to recite that the press plate has a radially outer peripheral portion spline engaged with a radially inner peripheral portion of the torque transmitting member.

Reik teaches an arrangement in which a pressure plate 52 is secured to a housing 57 through a set of leaf springs 60 each having respective end portions riveted to the housing (rivet connection not shown) and to the pressure plate (rivet connection 61). Such an arrangement of rivet connections through leaf springs would by no means have suggested Applicants' claimed arrangement in which a press plate has a radially outer peripheral portion spline engaged with a radially inner peripheral portion of the torque transmitting member. Indeed, modification of Reik in such a manner as to produce Applicants' invention would require a wholesale redesign of Reik, there being no suggestion to do so either in Reik or otherwise in the prior art.

Accordingly, at least as presently amended, Claim 2 clearly distinguishes patentably from Reik and should now be allowed.

As to Claim 5, the language has been revised more particularly to characterize the ring member of the friction torque limiter as having a conical periphery providing a

friction surface through which torque is transmitted in the friction path.

It is apparent that Fukushima's ring 1 does not have a conical periphery; it merely has conical depressions formed on an axial face thereof. Note further that newly presented dependent Claim 6 recites that the friction surface is a radially outer peripheral surface of the ring member, thus further distinguishing from Fukushima.

Accordingly, Claims 5 and 6 distinguish patentably from Fukushima and should also be allowed.

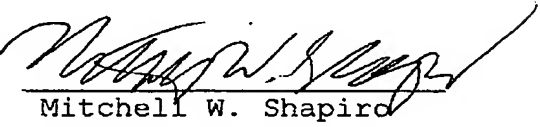
Claim 7 recites an arrangement in which the ring member of the friction torque limiter has a conical peripheral friction surface which is frictionally engaged with an adjacent conical surface and through which torque is thereby transmitted in said friction path. The foregoing evidently distinguishes patentably from the arrangement of balls in conical depressions as taught by Fukushima. Claim 8, like Claim 6, further recites that the friction surface is a radially outer peripheral surface of the ring member, thus further distinguishing from Fukushima.

In view of the amendments and remarks presented herein, a Notice of Allowance is believed to be clearly in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-9598) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on March 22, 2006.


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